

cover anymore. Health care reform means lowering the cost of care and keeping it low. It means improving the quality of care you get and keeping the quality high. It means that premiums you pay every month will not go up just because your insurance company feels as if they should.

Senator PATTY MURRAY of Washington told a story. I was at an event with her yesterday. She got up yesterday morning to find in the Washington press an insurance company that insures 135,000 Washingtonians will have a 17.5-percent increase immediately in their health insurance premiums. That is an average. Some are higher, some are lower. Reform means the premiums you pay every month will not go up just because your insurance company feels like it. It means keeping costs stable so the price of staying healthy does not fluctuate like a gallon of gas. It not only means making sure you can keep going to your family doctor or keep your health care plan if you like it but also that you can afford to do so.

No one can predict when the next accident might come, when one might get laid off. We don't know when we will get sick or when one of our loved ones will get sick. But we can put people in control of their own health care.

A doctor's first job when someone comes into the emergency room is to stabilize the patient. When it comes to addressing the emergency care in our health system, our job is to do the same—stabilize it. We have to cure the uncertainty in health care. We must fix our broken health care system so that when you open your medicine cabinet, you can be certain the prescription you need to get better will be there. When you open your wallet, you should be certain you can afford to go to the doctor. And when you open that small business in your hometown, you can be certain you can hire employees to grow your company, put your ideas into motion, realize your American dream, and have your employees covered with health insurance.

The status quo is ruining our country's financial stability. Right now, one-sixth of every dollar spent in America goes for health care. If we do not change this, by the year 2020—that is a little over 10 years away—it will be 35 cents of every dollar spent will be on health care. It will bankrupt our country. We must change this.

I ask my Republican colleagues: Let's not make this a partisan issue. Let's work together. That is why I so appreciated a number of valiant Republicans on the Finance Committee working together to try to come up with a health care plan that can be supported by Democrats and Republicans in the Senate. We can do it alone. Democrats can do it alone. We do not want to do it alone because it would be under something we call reconciliation, and it changes the rules. And instead of being able to do a large amount of health care, we are only going to be able to do a little health

care. We want to work with our Republican colleagues. This is not a partisan issue. People losing their health care are not Democrats, Republicans, or Independents; they are Americans, whether from the State of Oregon or the State of Nevada.

The Presiding Officer represents the State of Oregon. There is extremely high unemployment in Oregon, higher than in Nevada, and we are over 11 percent. In 1 month, we went from 10.4 percent to 11.3 percent unemployment. So the people losing their jobs, losing their health care in Oregon and Nevada and all the rest of the States are not partisans. They want something done to restore their jobs, to get them new jobs, and to give them health insurance, if they do not have it, and make sure it is not taken away from them.

I reach out to my Republican colleagues to join with us in this necessity of doing something about health care. This is not something we are looking for work to do. We are doing it because it is absolutely essential. Right now, I repeat, one-sixth of every dollar spent goes to health care in America. If we do not change this, in just a few years it will be 35 cents of every dollar. We cannot sustain that.

Mr. President, it is my understanding you are going to open morning business.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I wish to note, in the context of my remarks, the announcement yesterday that the deficit for the first 9 months of this year is now \$1.1 trillion, headed for, at the end of this year, \$1.8 trillion, perhaps the highest percentage of GDP in the history of this country outside of wartime. We are now in the process of adding amendment after amendment in the HELP Committee without any idea of the cost. As one of my colleagues who proposed a massive expansion of women's health care yesterday said in

the committee: It is not the cost that is important; it is the cause. A remarkable approach to the fact that we are mortgaging our children and grandchildren's futures in a fashion which is the commission of generational theft.

Chairman DODD received a new score on his bill last week by hiding the real cost of the bill. A few weeks ago, the preliminary cost was over \$1 trillion. Now it is at \$900 billion—same bill, just different numbers. On the one hand, we are told reform is urgent and, at the same time, they don't implement the bill for 4 years; conveniently, after the next Presidential election. Then they will tax employers with a job-killing employer health mandate, collect \$52 billion from small employers, the engine that will take us out of our recession. Nobody disagrees about the role of small business in our economy. Then this latest proposal hides the cost of the additional hundreds of billions of dollars of Medicaid expansion.

The State of California is offering IOUs to pay their bills. They have a \$26 billion deficit. We are going to increase Medicaid's burden on the States to the tune, in the case of California, of several more billion dollars. How are they going to pay for it? It is an impossible task.

I am told that is not about the cost, but it is about the cost. Just as the stimulus package was about the cost, just as the continued bailout of industries such as the automotive industry, banks, financial institutions and anybody who is "too big to fail," when small business people all over America are closing their doors because they are too small to save.

For the first 9 months, the deficit is \$1.1 trillion. That is \$800 billion greater than the deficit recorded last year. The American people have a right to know what this health care bill will cost, what it will cost now and what it will cost our grandchildren.

The Washington Post today tells us how not to reform health care, in opposing the government insurance President Obama now says is so critical. According to today's Washington Post:

... it would be tragic if this issue were to drag down health reform or make it impossible to secure Republican votes. Restructuring the health-care system is risky enough that Democrats would be wise not to try to accomplish it entirely on their own.

I certainly hope my friends on the other side of the aisle pay attention to that comment. It has turned into a partisan effort, and it is too bad.

From today's Wall Street Journal, "Democrats Hoodwinked the Health Lobby. Americans's health-care CEOs are being taken for a ride by Congress and their own lobbyists."

It is a very interesting article by Kimberly Strassel.

The industry's calculation is that by cutting deals, it can set the terms of its contributions to "reform" and even wangle up-sides. The insurers came first, promising to squeeze \$2 trillion in costs out of the system. Democrats are letting Ms. Ignagni believe